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PROBLEMS OF SCHOOL DECENTRALIZATION IN NEW YORK CITY.

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DEMANDS FOR GREATER COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT IN AND LOCAL CONTROL OF PUBLIC SCHOOLS ARE BECOMING INCREASINGLY INSISTENT. IN SEVERAL OF NEW YORK CITY'S SCHOOL DISTRICTS LOCAL BOARDS HAVE TAKEN THE INITIATIVE TO HEIGHTEN THEIR EFFECTIVENESS AND POWERS, BUT THEY AND OTHERS DISAGREE ABOUT DEFINITION OF DECENTRALIZATION AND WAYS TO IMPLEMENT IT. AN EFFECTIVE PLAN MUST CLARIFY (1) SELECTION PROCEDURES FOR LOCAL SCHOOL BOARDS, (2) WAYS TO APPOINT THE LOCAL SUPERINTENDENT, (3) BUDGET QUESTIONS, (4) DEPLOYMENT OF PERSONNEL, AND (5) SCHOOL DISTRICT BOUNDARIES. WIDESPREAD COMMUNITY REPRESENTATION ON LOCAL BOARDS IS ONE WAY TO HAVE LOCAL LOYALTY AND PROBLEMS BETTER REFLECTED IN THE SCHOOLS. A TYPICAL 11-MEMBER GROUP MIGHT INCLUDE FIVE PARENTS, TWO TEACHERS, THREE COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION REPRESENTATIVES, AND ONE ELECTED LOCAL OFFICIAL. THE DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENT SHOULD BE CHOSEN BY THE CRITERIA OF LOCAL SELECTION, FOCUS OF HIS LOYALTIES, ACCOUNTABILITY AND ABILITY TO DEVELOP COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT. LUMP SUM APPROPRIATIONS WOULD AID LOCAL PLANNING FOR BUDGET ALLOCATIONS AND LOCAL CONTROL OVER THE DEVELOPMENT OF STAFF. SUCH BUDGET CONTROL IS THE SINGLE MOST IMPORTANT WAY TO RESPOND TO COMMUNITY INTEREST AND TO ENCOURAGE INNOVATION AND PROVIDE FLEXIBILITY. PRACTICAL DECENTRALIZED BOUNDARIES MIGHT BE DERIVED FROM EDUCATIONAL PARKS, STRENGTHENING THE PRESENT 31 SCHOOL DISTRICTS OR REORGANIZING THEM INTO 15 NEW AREAS, OR FROM CREATING FIVE NEW BOROUGH-WIDE DIVISIONS. THIS ARTICLE WAS PUBLISHED IN "THE URBAN REVIEW," VOLUME 2, FEBRUARY 1967. (NH)

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Problems of School Decentralization in New York City

by Marilyn Gittell

Behind much of the public clamor over education in the cities lies the belief of many people that governmental services—including the school system—have failed to be responsive to the needs and feelings of their clienteles. Since well before the outbreak of trouble at I.S. 201, The Urban Review *has been publishing essays and proposals that address themselves to the question of how these services may be made more sensitive to the often confused but very real desires of the people served. The following is another exploration of this issue.*

In almost every area of government the need for greater community involvement has been recognized. The Economic Opportunity Act provided for direct participation of the poor in community programs. Title III of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 reflects the federal government's concern with local community group participation in developing education programs. In New York City, local housing and planning councils, park committees, and police-community boards have been established within the last several years. And currently the mayor has been pressing, though in vain, for the development of local city halls.[1] The organization of local community agencies suggests a dissatisfaction with highly centralized city bureaucracies which do not provide the kinds of services and responses to local needs that should be forthcoming. The Housing and Development administrator in the city recognized the problem when, in explaining his decentralization of urban renewal, he stated, "It's about time we faced up to the fact that we cannot make all the decisions at City Hall.[2]

No more than any other big city agency has the public school system escaped this demand for decentralization through increased local control. Indeed, the demand—and the resistance—have been greater in this area than any other.

In New York City, the pressure built up by this development has been manifest in several well-publicized incidents. It is evident in the creation of a "people's board of education"—a symbolic act by a segment of the ghetto community that wants to have the legal board more representative of its interests. The I.S. 201 incident was a result of direct action by part of a community to secure the right to select the principal. Local school boards in Manhattan have been meeting to consider how to strengthen their positions. Several local school board members in Manhattan have resigned to dramatize their ineffectiveness as community school policymakers under the present structure. In Brooklyn, an unofficial local board was created out of dissatisfaction with the character and programs of the officially designated local board. The unofficial board is in the process of developing a community-oriented school program with Brooklyn College. P.S. 125-36 in Harlem is also working toward a highly developed community apparatus to run the new combined school. The superintendent and superintendents before him have reiterated the need for decentralization, their plans usually entailing the expansion of the powers of the district superintendents. Christopher Jencks talks of encouraging competition between schools through flexible local programming.[3] The U.F.T. in commenting on the 1967-68 school budget noted that no provision had been made for decentralization and, therefore, that the most fundamental school issue had been ignored.[4] The acceptance of the principles of decentralization and local control were also recommended in the report of the Temporary Commission on City Finances.[5] Mayor Lindsay's Task Force on Education called for experimental community-school projects under the aegis of the Human Resources Administration. Commissioner Allen applauded a proposal by Joe L. Rempson in *The Urban Review* that called for community election of local school boards to encourage local control and participation.[6] The Ford Foundation has been interested in exp community control in selected areas in the city in cooperatio of Education and other groups.

All of these efforts differ in their approach, and more fun comprehensiveness of their plans. There are those who wa decentralization to be achieved within the present structure the position of the district superintendent. Those who curr within the existing structure, the board, its staff, the U.F. the United Parents Association fall into this category.

The Public Education Association in its recent recomm centralization indicated a stronger commitment to restructu Their proposal called for local selection of the district sup principals and increased local control over budgeting and c

There are others who would like to experiment with lo lected areas of the city. Their position can be explained va cession to the mounting pressure from the local community nition of the failures in the present structure, and probably as to test some of the suggested plans. The mayor's Task Fo Foundation and perhaps some within the school system are effort. In addition, several local community groups would be in the operation of their local schools without revising the structure.

Finally, there are many and various people who feel that m can only be achieved by a complete reorganization of the s frustrated by experimentation that is never applied to the that, in any case is never followed through.

These different definitions of the concept of decentraliz propriate to identify the basic elements for which any effec tion effort must plan in detail: (1) the procedure for selec board; (2) the method of appointment of the local superinten trol of the budget plan; (4) the determination of the deploym and (5) the setting of boundaries for local districts. In the cussion, it should become clear that there can be no effective without a much larger measure of local control of the educa

1. Selection of the Local Board

In New York City members of the 31 local school boards the Board of Education on the basis of recommendations selection panels. Recommendations for appointment are made by city-wide organizations.

The local boards do not participate in the determination Generally, they act as community buffers, holding hearin narrow local issues. They have no authority to resolve loca boards view themselves as preservers of local interests, par gard to integration policy. Officially, the boards rarely act as are more prone to voice personal views on issues. Certainly the information or facilities, much less the authority, to follo ters of general educational policy.

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All of these efforts differ in their approach, and more fundamentally in the comprehensiveness of their plans. There are those who want a minimum of decentralization to be achieved within the present structure by strengthening the position of the district superintendent. Those who currently hold power within the existing structure, the board, its staff, the U.F.T., and perhaps the United Parents Association fall into this category.

The Public Education Association in its recent recommendation on decentralization indicated a stronger commitment to restructuring the system. Their proposal called for local selection of the district superintendent and principals and increased local control over budgeting and curriculum.

There are others who would like to experiment with local control in selected areas of the city. Their position can be explained variously as a concession to the mounting pressure from the local community people, as recognition of the failures in the present structure, and probably as a genuine desire to test some of the suggested plans. The mayor's Task Force and the Ford Foundation and perhaps some within the school system are encouraging this effort. In addition, several local community groups would be satisfied to share in the operation of their local schools without revising the total city school structure.

Finally, there are many and various people who feel that meaningful change can only be achieved by a complete reorganization of the system. They are frustrated by experimentation that is never applied to the total system and that, in any case is never followed through.

These different definitions of the concept of decentralization make it appropriate to identify the basic elements for which any effective decentralization effort must plan in detail: (1) the procedure for selection of the local board; (2) the method of appointment of the local superintendent; (3) the control of the budget plan; (4) the determination of the deployment of personnel; and (5) the setting of boundaries for local districts. In the course of the discussion, it should become clear that there can be no effective decentralization without a much larger measure of local control of the educational apparatus.

1. Selection of the Local Board

In New York City members of the 31 local school boards are appointed by the Board of Education on the basis of recommendations made by district selection panels. Recommendations for appointment are also unofficially made by city-wide organizations.

The local boards do not participate in the determination of school policy. Generally, they act as community buffers, holding hearings and discussing narrow local issues. They have no authority to resolve local problems. Local boards view themselves as preservers of local interests, particularly with regard to integration policy. Officially, the boards rarely act as a body; members are more prone to voice personal views on issues. Certainly they do not have the information or facilities, much less the authority, to follow through on matters of general educational policy.

The Board of Education has been reluctant to delegate powers to local boards for fear that they would encroach upon its authority. District superintendents are also hesitant to enhance the position of the local boards, because they might interfere with local school administration. Nevertheless, "reor-

Continued on page 27.

Conclusions

It is very clear that reducing the range of ability in these classes was not associated with increased achievement in reading. The lesson for the school administrator is equally clear—homogeneous grouping is not a panacea for educational ills. The school administrator who looks to homogenous grouping as a means of improving pupil achievement will find the process of little value unless definite programs, specifically designed for the several ability levels into which they group their classes, are developed. Grouping by itself, without curricular modification as a concomitant, will not give rise to the desired outcome of improved pupil performance.

**Miriam Goldberg and others. The Effects of Ability Grouping. New York: Teachers College Press, 1966.*

Dr. Joseph Justman is acting director of the Bureau of Research for the Board of Education of the City of New York.

"Quality Education": A Definition

by Irwin Goldberg

The phrase "quality education" is simply the current version of the cant terminology with which we have traditionally masked the functions of our educational system. As such it may be fitting to continue its use as an ideological slogan but it should be discarded in our analytic endeavors.

Building on the customary definitions, we can say that the functions of primary and secondary education are at least four-fold: (1) preparation for the adult role of citizen; (2) training to fill an appropriate adult occupational role; (3) development of a personality, especially inter-personal skills, adequate to insure the minimal level of well-being necessary for performance of any adult role; and, relatively recent in acceptance, (4) removal from the labor market and from inactive (unemployed) status of a considerable and ever-increasing proportion of the population.

In these terms, "quality education" can be defined as the maximization of a school systems' performance of these four functions.

Obviously, none of these functions can be performed adequately without suitable interaction with community structures. Thus, for example, no vocational training program will be successful in an economy that deliberately or inadvertently creates labor surpluses in the work areas of the individuals being trained. Recognizing this, let me restrict my discussion of "quality education" to the schools alone, keeping in mind that I am speaking of schools as they are and will be, not as we might like to see them.

Of the four functions of education, citizenship training has incomparably the highest priority from the standpoint of society. Nothing is of greater importance to dominant elements in the state, and to the middle class as well, than indoctrination of all segments of the population with the values, belief systems, cognitive and perceptual structures, and personalities, that will induce them to support the existing distribution of power regardless of the frustrations imposed on them by the political, social and economic systems. No school system which fails in this task will earn the support of the community or general society; this, therefore, must be the first aim of any program for "quality education" that is not to be fecklessly utopian. (For do we not seek utopian programs that are also socially possible?)

From the individual's viewpoint, the second function, vocational training in the broadest sense, is probably the most important. Here, however, we must face up to the fact that an attempt to prepare *all* young people to achieve the highest occupational roles available in the society will increase considerably the drop-out rates for many groups in the population. This i positions (as, for example, lawyer, physician, and teacher) application to academic achievement in verbal expression skills as well as in abstract reasoning. And these are the ver young subgroup members seem least inclined and least p Furthermore, since the skills required for lofty occupationa generalized (unlike apprenticeship in carpentry or plumb directly related to the jobs for which personal motivation an ment predispose the children of the poor. Nor can we ignor though these children may succeed in completing the hig which this generalized training is preparation, they may st the appropriate occupational role on ethnic or racial grou

On the other hand, the rapid changes we can anticipate i structure mean that any specific training they get for the p occupational roles may disqualify them for the jobs that w peak of their mature capacities. In other words, cultivation learning skills does prepare the individual to undertake e tasks as these may present themselves in his workin less, on the whole, it seems probable that a differentiated sy in which some part of the population is prepared for colleg is prepared for the skilled crafts, would be most acceptable the community. Yet, it is quite unlikely that such a progra able to the leadership of many of the civil rights groups. any such Platonic ordering of men of different "metals"—r perceptably one order might shade into the other—would tarian ethos so central to the civil rights movement. And in ing to be increasingly difficult to put across any program, wh that runs counter to this egalitarianism.

If this hypothesis is sound, then "quality education" will prepares everyone for college—this despite the consequenc ing conflict between the interests of the individual in bein best job possible and that of society in having every job

The third function of education, personality developme essential as the pressures arising from the stress of training are intensified. However, given the priorities set for the allo in the always limited school budget, it will be looked on as this only means shifting the economic cost of personality institutions that must handle them as adults. At the same ti is the prospect of automation as a factor displacing many productive labor while putting others on reduced time w in income for either category. To the extent that this situat for "life-appreciation and self-enhancement" will becom major adult role and recognized as such.

The fourth function of education, providing an alternati might be viewed as incarceration of unwanted and unneed promises to be of increasing importance as we enter the pe and affluence. Though military service may partially solv solution affects only the older teen-agers. Thus we are posed more attractive prisons for a large group of youngsters. that "quality education" in this respect might ultimately b that recognize that the solution lies in greater student auto range of student activities such as auto driving. These mig sition of intellectual skills and knowledge save that some f gation is inevitable, some "meritocracy" in which such s future leaders of society. (This can be quite democratic in f utilizing criteria of capacity rather than the wealth, race, cla tion of the student.) This structure insures that school syste sant prisons and preparation for the highest occupational we imply that the prisoners would not be getting a first-rate meant is that some sacrifices can be made in their educatio damage that would otherwise be incurred if we did not have training.

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On the other hand, the rapid changes we can anticipate in the occupational structure mean that any specific training they get for the presently available occupational roles may disqualify them for the jobs that will be open at the peak of their mature capacities. In other words, cultivation of the generalized learning skills does prepare the individual to undertake ever more complex tasks as these may present themselves in his working life. Nevertheless, on the whole, it seems probable that a differentiated system of education, in which some part of the population is prepared for college and another part is prepared for the skilled crafts, would be most acceptable to individuals and the community. Yet, it is quite unlikely that such a program would be acceptable to the leadership of many of the civil rights groups. This is so because any such Platonic ordering of men of different "metals"—no matter how imperceptably one order might shade into the other—would violate the egalitarian ethos so central to the civil rights movement. And in the future it is going to be increasingly difficult to put across any program, whatever its cogency, that runs counter to this egalitarianism.

If this hypothesis is sound, then "quality education" will become that which prepares everyone for college—this despite the consequence of thereby creat ing conflict between the interests of the individual in being prepared for the best job possible and that of society in having every job adequately filled.

The third function of education, personality development, becomes more essential as the pressures arising from the stress of training for complex roles are intensified. However, given the priorities set for the allocation of resources in the always limited school budget, it will be looked on as a luxury, although this only means shifting the economic cost of personality casualities to other institutions that must handle them as adults. At the same time, however, there is the prospect of automation as a factor displacing many more workers from productive labor while putting others on reduced time with no diminution in income for either category. To the extent that this situation arises, training for "life-appreciation and self-enhancement" will become training for the major adult role and recognized as such.

The fourth function of education, providing an alternative to employment, might be viewed as incarceration of unwanted and unneeded labor. This also promises to be of increasing importance as we enter the period of automation and affluence. Though military service may partially solve the problem, this solution affects only the older teen-agers. Thus we are posed the task of making more attractive prisons for a large group of youngsters. One might suggest that "quality education" in this respect might ultimately be defined in terms that recognize that the solution lies in greater student autonomy and a broader range of student activities such as auto driving. These might hinder the acquisition of intellectual skills and knowledge save that some form of elitist segregation is inevitable, some "meritocracy" in which such skills are taught the future leaders of society. (This can be quite democratic in form and substance, utilizing criteria of capacity rather than the wealth, race, class or ethnic derivation of the student.) This structure insures that school systems can be both pleasant prisons and preparation for the highest occupational positions. Nor do we imply that the prisoners would not be getting a first-rate education; what is meant is that some sacrifices can be made in their education without the social damage that would otherwise be incurred if we did not have some form of elite-training.

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Decentralizing New York's Schools *(Continued from page 4)*

ganization plans" to strengthen the role of the district superintendent and the role of the local board are presented annually. The superintendent has admitted, however, that without budget and personnel powers not much can be accomplished.

Central selection of local school board members, in itself, has been fairly effective in assuring compliance to central policies. Thus, while it is not impossible to achieve some decentralization with central selection of local board members, local selection of the board would assure local loyalty.

There is another reason for local selection of the board under any decentralization plan. If there is genuine interest in encouraging community involvement, a locally selected board can achieve that end. The selection process can serve as a device to stimulate community participation. The Rempson proposal, for example, sought to use local school board elections as a means for arousing interest in the schools, but under any circumstances the procedures contemplated should be sensitive to this purpose.

On the other hand, although it is true that the large majority of school boards in the United States are elected, descriptions of school board elections do not recommend them as examples of ideal procedures. In cities with nonpartisan elections the political parties still play an active role. In other cities the trials of campaigning have discouraged some of the better people from becoming candidates. Often other local issues determine school election results. The Rempson plan attempts to deal with some of these complains by providing for campaign financing and preservice training for board candidates. But in a one party city such as New York City, with strong local party organizations, those protections may not be sufficient to ward off the party stalwarts. Elections with small turnouts accomplish little by way of involvement and ghetto districts typically produce low turnout. This is in part a natural outgrowth of the residents' lack of voting experience and in part a product of their alienation from the system. Limited voting in local elections and primaries indicates the kind of response we might anticipate in school board elections.

Regardless of how the local board is selected, however, an effort should be made to secure wide representation of the community. Studies of school board membership indicate that most board members are managerial or professional. But parents of school children should also sit on the board and should elect or select more than a third of its members. Teachers rarely sit on school boards yet they too represent an important segment of school-community interests. If channels of communication are to be open and cooperation encouraged, teachers on the school board can help to facilitate these goals. Community organizations, particularly civic groups, should be represented on the board for similar reasons. Local elected officials, or representatives of that group might also be asked to serve ex officio.

A possible plan for board membership might include five members elected in convention by the parents of the schools, or their delegates; two teachers selected by the teachers from the district; three members selected by a joint council of local organizations; and one member representing the duly elected local officials in the district. Each of these appointing or electing bodies could in turn become viable school action agencies concerned with school policy, presenting alternative courses of action to the board and supportive of community interests.

The procedure for selection of the local board is only one determinant in the effectiveness of local control. A local board without budget and personnel powers has no policy to make.

2. Appointment of the Local Superintendent

The selection of the chief school officer is crucial to the achievement of local control. The loyalty and responsibility of the local superintendent will be determined by the source of his appointment. Central selection maintains central control.

In the present structure, the local district superintendents in New York City are the only means for decentralization of school administration. Yet at the moment they have almost no discretion in the use of funds and limited discretion in the assignment of special personnel. Their staffs are small and mainly clerical. They rely on headquarters' directives for all policy decisions. Their time is spent on minor issues, for they do not participate in the assignment of personnel, curriculum planning, or allocation of resources. In only rare instances (usually when they have viable personal contacts at headquarters) can they influence the decisions made for their districts. prefer not to have any increase in their powers and of advantage of powers granted to them.

Local control, to be at all meaningful, must provide i participation in the selection of the local superintend vary from local selection from a list provided by central which some local control is exercised but the ultimate agency is maintained, to complete freedom of choice by

The method of selection of the local superintendent cause the determination of the powers of the local sup made in the light of his loyalties. If he is locally selected, there can be greater reliance on him in the development programs and the appointment of staff. If he is chosen board may wish to be the most important policymakin bility is another factor to be weighed. A locally selected be held more directly accountable for his actions. The s has added relevance in the development of community id aging community action. If the local community is respo of a superintendent it is more likely to be actively conc schools are run.

3. The School Budget

There are several possibilities in the arrangements for lo decentralization. The budget is the plan for school poli should embody, the philosophical underpinnings of those for policy. It is also the means for providing public accou penditure of public funds. If the budget is prepared un large bureaucracy without concern for performance or lo of these things. In 1962 the New York City Board of Ed gave local boards the power to conduct budget hearings a dations—neither of these powers produced any change aration of the budget. Centrally established standards a cedures were not adjusted to review local requests.

Local control and effective decentralization demand a lo control of local spending. This can be achieved by a lump to the local district allowing the local area to make budg limits of their appropriation. Without this kind of power e making would be virtually impossible. A compromise of l local funds restricts local planning and policy to only tho pended for the major components of the educational pro controlled centrally. Without local budgeting there can local programs, the testing of performance, or judgmen fectiveness of the local superintendent and other school p

Provision for budget staff is an integral part of budget local community has its own staff it cannot partake in bu Through its staff the local district can justify its demand priations, be they lump-sum amounts or allotments for Performance budgeting which can serve as the basis for should be standard operating procedure in local school d

4. The Deployment of Local Personnel

The appointment of staff, principals, and teachers is prop the responsible chief school administrator. Under a ce aspects of the deployment of personnel are provided for a is the case in New York City except for a small number of gories designated for special assignment of personnel.

Under the constraints of the union contract and the r Board of Examiners, decentralization in the deployment tually impossible. The only way local control can be achie supplemental local district contracts under minimum and tural arrangements negotiated centrally. These local contr for merit increases, special pay rates for master teachers an aides, etc. The Board of Examiners must be abolished if l served. State eligibility requirements would be used for m

When one thinks of control of school personnel it usuall ing and removal of administrative staff and teachers, but th areas of school programming that are vitally affected by sonnel. The development of programs for school aides

ralizing New York's Schools *(Continued from page 4)*

plans" to strengthen the role of the district superintendent and the local board are presented annually. The superintendent has however, that without budget and personnel powers not much can lished.

selection of local school board members, in itself, has been fairly n assuring compliance to central policies. Thus, while it is not im- achieve some decentralization with central selection of local board local selection of the board would assure local loyalty.

another reason for local selection of the board under any decen- plan. If there is genuine interest in encouraging community in-, a locally selected board can achieve that end. The selection process as a device to stimulate community participation. The Rempson or example, sought to use local school board elections as a means g interest in the schools, but under any circumstances the proce- emplated should be sensitive to this purpose.

other hand, although it is true that the large majority of school he United States are elected, descriptions of school board elections ommend them as examples of ideal procedures. In cities with non- ections the political parties still play an active role. In other cities campaigning have discouraged some of the better people from be- didates. Often other local issues determine school election results. on plan attempts to deal with some of these complains by provid- mpaign financing and preservice training for board candidates. party city such as New York City, with strong local party organiza- protections may not be sufficient to ward off the party stalwarts. ith small turnouts accomplish little by way of involvement and ricts typically produce low turnout. This is in part a natural out- he residents' lack of voting experience and in part a product of ation from the system. Limited voting in local elections and pri- icates the kind of response we might anticipate in school board

ss of how the local board is selected, however, an effort should be ure wide representation of the community. Studies of school board p indicate that most board members are managerial or professional. of school children should also sit on the board and should elect ore than a third of its members. Teachers rarely sit on school boards o represent an important segment of school-community interests. If communication are to be open and cooperation encouraged, the school board can help to facilitate these goals. Community ns, particularly civic groups, should be represented on the board reasons. Local elected officials, or representatives of that group be asked to serve ex officio.

e plan for board membership might include five members elected on by the parents of the schools, or their delegates; two teachers the teachers from the district; three members selected by a joint ocal organizations; and one member representing the duly elected ls in the district. Each of these appointing or electing bodies could ome viable school action agencies concerned with school policy, alternative courses of action to the board and supportive of com- rests.

edure for selection of the local board is only one determinant in ness of local control. A local board without budget and personnel no policy to make.

nt of the Local Superintendent

n of the chief school officer is crucial to the achievement of local e loyalty and responsibility of the local superintendent will be by the source of his appointment. Central selection maintains rol.

sent structure, the local district superintendents in New York City means for decentralization of school administration. Yet at the y have almost no discretion in the use of funds and limited dis- e assignment of special personnel. Their staffs are small and mainly ey rely on headquarters' directives for all policy decisions. Their t on minor issues, for they do not participate in the assignment l, curriculum planning, or allocation of resources. In only rare sually when they have viable personal contacts at headquarters) can they influence the decisions made for their districts. Many of them would prefer not to have any increase in their powers and often they do not take advantage of powers granted to them.

Local control, to be at all meaningful, must provide in some way for local participation in the selection of the local superintendent. Procedures may vary from local selection from a list provided by central headquarters, under which some local control is exercised but the ultimate power of the central agency is maintained, to complete freedom of choice by the local community.

The method of selection of the local superintendent is of importance because the determination of the powers of the local superintendent must be made in the light of his loyalties. If he is locally selected, without restrictions, there can be greater reliance on him in the development of budget and school programs and the appointment of staff. If he is chosen centrally, the local board may wish to be the most important policymaking agency. Accountability is another factor to be weighed. A locally selected superintendent can be held more directly accountable for his actions. The selection process also has added relevance in the development of community identity and in encouraging community action. If the local community is responsible for the choice of a superintendent it is more likely to be actively concerned with how the schools are run.

3. The School Budget

There are several possibilities in the arrangements for local budgeting under decentralization. The budget is the plan for school policy. It embodies, or should embody, the philosophical underpinnings of those who are responsible for policy. It is also the means for providing public accountability for the expenditure of public funds. If the budget is prepared under the routine of a large bureaucracy without concern for performance or local needs it is none of these things. In 1962 the New York City Board of Education reluctantly gave local boards the power to conduct budget hearings and make recommendations—neither of these powers produced any change in the central preparation of the budget. Centrally established standards and regularized procedures were not adjusted to review local requests.

Local control and effective decentralization demand a local budget plan and control of local spending. This can be achieved by a lump-sum appropriation to the local district allowing the local area to make budget policy within the limits of their appropriation. Without this kind of power effective local policymaking would be virtually impossible. A compromise of limited allotment of local funds restricts local planning and policy to only those funds. Funds expended for the major components of the educational program would still be controlled centrally. Without local budgeting there can be no evaluation of local programs, the testing of performance, or judgments regarding the effectiveness of the local superintendent and other school personnel.

Provision for budget staff is an integral part of budget control. Unless the local community has its own staff it cannot partake in budget policymaking. Through its staff the local district can justify its demands for budget appropriations, be they lump-sum amounts or allotments for special programs. Performance budgeting which can serve as the basis for program evaluation should be standard operating procedure in local school districts.

4. The Deployment of Local Personnel

The appointment of staff, principals, and teachers is properly the function of the responsible chief school administrator. Under a centralized system all aspects of the deployment of personnel are provided for at headquarters. This is the case in New York City except for a small number of special school categories designated for special assignment of personnel.

Under the constraints of the union contract and the requirements of the Board of Examiners, decentralization in the deployment of personnel is virtually impossible. The only way local control can be achieved is to provide for supplemental local district contracts under minimum and maximum contractural arrangements negotiated centrally. These local contracts should provide for merit increases, special pay rates for master teachers and the use of teacher aides, etc. The Board of Examiners must be abolished if local needs are to be served. State eligibility requirements would be used for minimum standards.

When one thinks of control of school personnel it usually is in terms of hiring and removal of administrative staff and teachers, but there are other broad areas of school programming that are vitally affected by the control of personnel. The development of programs for school aides has been seriously

hampered by the constraints of centrally established standards. Variations in curriculum adjusted to local needs are also affected. Efforts to experiment with any number of projects involving preprofessionals and community people cannot get off the ground. The proper use of special personnel, guidance people, and subject area specialists probably can only be realistically determined in local circumstances. Local control over personnel (within the broadest minimal central standards) could provide the single most important instrument for responding to community interest and encouraging meaningful experimentation and competition in local districts throughout the city.

Decentralized personnel deployment should provide for greater flexibility in the use of personnel and more intimate evaluation of their performance. This can only be achieved under a local superintendent who has the power of appointment, transfer, and removal. Predetermined standards set by a central budget bureau do not permit that flexibility. Local control of budget and funds are the source of flexible policy in the use of personnel.

If the local community is granted an excess amount of money to spend over and above the expenditures controlled from headquarters it will control only the deployment of personnel covered under that extra allotment of funds. Under a lump-sum appropriation to the local community more complete control can be exercised.

5. Boundaries of the Local District

It is difficult to determine the appropriate dimensions for a district that is to be at once large enough to be powerful and small enough to be "local," and of a size that makes sense in the terms of the community. Some experts establish 20,000 students as the maximum reasonable size of a local district. But even when size has been defined, working out viable district lines in a city as complex and changing as New York City poses another great problem.

Four basic approaches to drawing boundaries for local districts can be considered. Varying from very small local units to large political divisions the plans are as follows:

Educational parks as districts. An educational park requires a sizable area of land on which would be grouped facilities for all grades in the school system, many of which facilities would be shared. A park can afford to support extensive and expensive services. If offers at least a partial solution to segregation problems. It provides a basis for the flexibility essential to the schools in adapting to rapidly changing social needs. The educational park makes a natural area for a local school district. The flexibility inherent in an educational park would require that the persons responsible for administering it be given a good deal of discretion. Therefore, to have a successful park, much authority would need to be decentralized to that level. While certain services and responsibilities might remain centralized, organizationally, the city's school system would have to be restructured into administrative and educational units consistent with an educational park system. Objections to the concept of educational parks center on the costs involved and the length of time it would take to establish a sufficient number of parks to make them effective in achieving the desired objectives.

Strengthening existing local school districts. Another possible approach involves using the boundaries to the existing 31 local school districts. Each of the districts might then become a separate school policymaking entity with its own organization. Some central services would be maintained to service the district. Objections have been raised regrading the inappropriateness of some of the current boundaries and in those areas adjustments could be made. There is no rational basis for those districts and there appears to be little reason to retain them except that they already exist.

Decentralizing operations into fifteen city school districts. A third approach would be to establish fewer local school districts. A reorganization of the present city-wide school districts into 15 new districts might achieve a satisfactory geographic decentralization and still maintain districts of sufficient size to provide for economic local administration. Some feel that it would be easier to develop the powers of 15 separate districts and assure meaningful decentralization.

Establishing five borough school districts. Five separate borough school districts might be established in place of the present single city-wide district. Each district might be governed by a separate borough board of education. Local districts or even educational parks with independent powe lished under each borough district. The boroughs provide graphic boundaries and some larger community identifie would eliminate most of the central controls and services u system.

The existing poverty-area districts or the housing and districts might provide a rational basis for drawing bounda tricts within the boroughs. Experimentation with size of loc be desirable to determine the most rational means for de lines. A combination of proposals for district lines might be areas of the city – some homogenous communities, others h

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Marilyn Gittell is an associate professor of political science at t New York, and the editor of Urban Affairs Quarterly. *She is* pants and Participation: A Study of New York City Schoo *lished by the Center in March, 1967.*

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The existing poverty-area districts or the housing and planning council districts might provide a rational basis for drawing boundaries for local districts within the boroughs. Experimentation with size of local districts might be desirable to determine the most rational means for determining district lines. A combination of proposals for district lines might be tried in different areas of the city – some homogenous communities, others heterogenous.

These are some of the thorny problems of school decentralization. This paper outlines those characteristics that contribute to the development of a strong or weak decentralization plan. It is not intended to establish absolute prerequisites for each system but only to offer models and guidelines for evaluating proposals. If decentralization is to be achieved these factors must be weighed.

Some may suggest that I have ignored the mechanisms for encouraging and developing local participation, which is an essential component of local control. These devices should differ from community to community, they should be experimental and innovative. Once local control is achieved, participatory arrangements are the responsibility of the local community and its school leadership.

The demands of the ghetto population on the education establishment have opened a "Pandora's box" regarding public participation in democratic decision making. The school protest movements have raised fundamental questions about the way schools are run. These questions have meaning for the middle-class communities as well; unfortunately too few of them have risen to the challenge. The powerlessness of the ghetto in the determination of school policy is not distinctive to them, it is only that their needs are greater and the responses fewer. But local participation and local control are issues that are vital to the entire population and to the survival of the system.

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